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ABSTRACT

The data gathered for this study does not support the hypothesis that second grade students, when they write, do not borrow characters, settings, elements of a story, authors' styles and information from nonfictional literature. Students writings were studied to determine the extent of the borrowing, and to answer the questions: (1) Did the students borrow the names of characters from literature to use for their own stories? (2) Did the students use the setting of a known story and change it into their own work? (3) Did the students use elements from a story, such as retelling and actual story into their own words? (4) Did the students use a particular style known to an author to enhance their own story? and (5) Did the students use information from a nonfiction book for use in their own story? The hypothesis was rejected after the data was analyzed. The students did, in fact, borrow ideas from the literature that they read as they wrote their own stories during Writer's Workshop. An appendix contains a tally sheet. Contains 25 references and 2 tables of data. (Author/RS)

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ED 438 562

Do Children, When They Write, Borrow Ideas From the Literature They Read?

By:

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Masters of Arts

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Abstract

The data gathered for this study does not support the hypothesis that second grade students, when they write do not borrow characters, settings, elements of a story, authors' styles and information from nonfictional literature. Students writings were studied to determine the extent of the borrowing. 1) Did the students borrow the names of characters from literature to use for their own stories? 2) Did the students use the setting of a known story and change it into their own work? 3) Did the students use elements from a story, such as retelling and actual story into their own words? 4) Did the students use a particular style known to an author to enhance their own story? 5) Did the students use information from a nonfiction book for use in their own story?

The hypothesis was rejected after the data was analyzed. The students did, in fact, borrow ideas from the literature that they read as they wrote their own stories during Writer's Workshop.

Dedication:

I would like to dedicate this project to my husband, Gary. His support in proofreading this project was immeasurable.

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Donald Graves, author of Writing: Teachers and Children at Work, states that children want to write. "They want to write the first day of school. This is no accident. Before they went to school, they marked up walls, pavement, and newspapers with crayons, chalk, pens, or pencils...anything that makes a mark. The child's mark says, "I am." (Graves 1983).

Teachers can further develop children's motivation to write through the use of Writer's Workshop. Teaching writing through the use of Writer's Workshop began in the 1980's when experts such as Lucy Calkins, Nancie Atwell, Donald Murray, Donald Graves, Mary Ellen Giacobbe, Susan Sowers and others studied how children go about the task of writing. Based on their research, they found that children needed three things to be effective writers, time to write, ownership of their writing, and response to their writing (Atwell 1987).

First, the aforementioned researchers reported that time for Writer's Workshop needs to be scheduled daily. Daily writing time enables the children to learn the process of writing: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Second, the children need to experience ownership in their writing. Meaning, they need to write about topics of their own choosing. Third, children should listen to others' stories. Responses and questions about their work should make the revising process easier. Atwell states, "A writer wants response that takes the writer seriously and moves him or her forward, again, response that gives help without threatening the writer's dignity."

The relationship between writing and children's sense of story has also been examined and reported over the years (Vilscek 1990). Investigators agree that children's concepts of story, story schema, begins very early in the preschool years. Storytelling is essential and used by children as they tell and retell about experiences (Vilscek 1990). By the onset of the elementary school years, most

children have acquired the concept of a story and use story markers such as "Once upon a time" and "They lived happily ever after" (Applebee, 1980, and VanDongen 1987). Some researchers feel that the sense of story structure and design has been collectively emerging with children's writing (Vilscek 1990). Fitzgerald and Spiegel (1983) and Van Dongen (1987) not only agree that the sense of story structure and children's writing development occur simultaneously, but also good books can serve as writing models for emergent children authors. When children recognize ways that authors create characters, setting, plot, theme, style and format of literature, children begin to internalize these models and take risks in using them in their own writing. Applebee states, "Good children's literature contains a wealth of artistry that models and fosters creative writing."

Using ideas from literature in order to create children's own pieces of writing can be called literary borrowing (Lancia 1997). Children can "borrow" ideas by using familiar characters from stories (Lancia 1997). Borrowing can include children retelling an original plot in their own words or children can take the same events from a story but change the setting (Lancia 1997). Borrowing can also include children imitating the writing style of an author (Lancia 1997). Nonfiction information can also be borrowed from printed literature.

Therefore, do children, when they write during Writer's Workshop "borrow" ideas from the literature that they read? If children do borrow ideas from literature, do they use the entire plot for a retelling of an original story? Do children borrow a book's characters and write new material for them in a new plot? Do children borrow plot devices such as setting, conflict, language patterns and vocabulary, titles, and structural devices that are similar to a book

or series? Do children borrow information from nonfiction materials and use it in their own writing?

If research can provide definitive answers to the questions proposed, teachers will undoubtedly have better insight into how literature can influence and instruct young writers (Lancia 475). Literature may be the needed example for effective writing. In conclusion, if research can prove that a link between what a child reads and writes about is connected, then teachers can benefit by using literature that models specific skills. Some of these skills can include, but are not limited to, characterization, story setting, mood of a story, chronological events, language patterns, and plot.

Hypothesis:

Children, when they write, do not borrow characters, settings, elements of a story, authors' styles and information from nonfiction literature.

Procedure:

Literary borrowing was monitored as the students wrote original stories during Writer's Workshop. The writing period was conducted for 14 weeks, two days a week for 50-minute intervals. The beginning 5-10 minutes of Writer's Workshop consisted of a mini-lesson given by the teacher. The mini-lesson modeled a procedure or specific skill for the children to focus on during the writing period. Examples of conducted mini-lessons include grammar and mechanics strategies such as, a review of how to use capital letters and punctuation marks, how to write titles for stories, and what to do if a writer becomes "stuck" on how to spell a word. Other mini-lessons focused on how to build suspense in a story, how to foreshadow a problem or an event, and how to

use descriptive words when writing. As a skill was introduced during the mini-lessons, the teacher would model the skill through her own writing. The students were then encouraged to focus on the taught skill. At no time were the students asked to write imitatively of literature that they have read.

After the mini-lesson, the 21 second grade students wrote for 30 minutes about a topic of their choosing. They began the prewriting process of writing by brainstorming possible topics and interests. Based on their individual lists of five topics, the students chose one topic to write about. The drafting process of writing, when the students wrote their stories, was performed individually or collaboratively with a peer. Volunteers came into the classroom to help facilitate the drafting and editing process. These volunteers had received training on how to help children with writing. The volunteers met with the children to provide additional support and guidance during the writing process.

Once the children completed their revisions and editing, writing conferences were conducted individually or in a small group setting with the teacher or volunteers. After the children read their rough drafts, comments were made by the listeners. These comments include praise for their writing, as well as any recommendations for clarification or improvements. Upon completion of the conferences, the children made any necessary revisions. Once revisions were made, the children had the choice if they would like to publish their work by typing their stories on the classroom computers. In addition, the children created illustrations that complemented their writing. Even unpublished, or untyped, stories were given an illustration.

The remaining 10 minutes of Writer's Workshop was spent celebrating an author's completed work. The child sat in a chair labeled "Author's Chair." After the child read their story and displayed their illustration, the audience was

allowed to ask a question or state a comment about the author's work. The questions and comments were limited to five per author. After the celebration, the author's work was displayed in the classroom library.

Published and unpublished work was displayed and collected in the classroom library. Upon completion of the study, 96 published stories and 51 unpublished stories were used as evidence of literary borrowing. Published stories included stories that were written, revised, edited and typed. An illustration accompanied a published story. Unpublished stories were stories that were written, but not necessarily revised and edited. Unpublished stories were not typed, although an illustration often accompanied an unpublished story. For the purposes of this study, the 96 published stories and 51 unpublished stories were combined for a total of 147 samples of the students' writing.

The following categories were used to determine if borrowing from actual literature did occur: characters, setting, elements of a story, authors' styles, and information from nonfiction literature. In addition to the aforementioned classification, the following questions would provide insight to accept or reject the hypothesis. Did the students borrow the names of characters from literature to use for their own stories? Did the students use the setting of a known story and use it in their own work? Did the students use elements from a story, such as retelling an actual story into their own words? Did the students use a particular style known to an author to enhance their own story? Did the students use information from a nonfiction book for use in their own story? A survey form (Appendix A) was used to tally the use of the aforementioned categories. Both published and unpublished works were included in the study, yet they were added separately.

One possible limitation to this study is that the students heard published and unpublished stories read in the author's chair after the Writer's Workshop sessions. The sharing of the stories, at times, produced the same characters to be used by other authors. As a counter measure to this limitation, the teacher stressed the importance of keeping individual lists of story topics and ideas. The students were encouraged to write about topics that interested them, and while it was acceptable to use someone else's writing as a springboard, ultimately the topic had to interest the author at hand.

Results:

As can be readily seen in Tables I and II as much as 29% of the stories students wrote utilized some element with frequency (characters) and that all six characteristics of authors content or style was utilized at least twice. It was also noted that some children's stories utilized more than one characteristic.

Table I

Categories and frequency of children's borrowing

Borrowed Ideas	Completed Stories	Number of Students Who Borrowed
Characters	147	43
Setting	147	8
Retell of a story	147	18
Information from nonfiction literature	147	9
Author's style	147	4

Table II
Percentage of Borrowing

Borrowed Ideas	Completed Stories	Percentage of Borrowing
Characters	147	29%
Setting	147	5%
Retell of a story	147	12%
Information from nonfiction literature	147	6%
Author's style	147	2%

Conclusion:

The data gathered for this study indicated that almost all of the children in this study, when they write, borrowed characters, setting, elements of a story, authors' styles and information from nonfictional literature. In this study, second grade students, when they write, were seen to imitate their role models and write their own stories based on previously written stories. The result of this study does not support the hypothesis that the reverse of these findings have been founds.

Implications of this Study:

Literature can inspire, influence, and instruct young writers by providing examples needed for effective learning. For example, if an instructor wanted to teach young children about the concept of setting, the instructor could choose a story that gave a descriptive example of a setting. One example could be the narrow path that Little Red Riding Hood walked on as she traveled through the woods to get to her grandmother's house in Little Red Riding Hood. After directly teaching the concept of setting, the instructor should then have children write their own stories that included a descriptive setting. If a young writer chose to imitate the setting given in Little Red Riding Hood, this should not be viewed as copying. This should be viewed as a young writer practicing his or her craft. Literature provides effective models for writing.

The students in this study borrowed ideas in their writing 55% of the time. Lancia suggested that literary borrowing is "an acceptable, natural occurring practice" because it occurs so frequently in classrooms (Lancia 1997). Lancia also stated in his study that a "literature-rich environment in combination with

an interactive writing workshop enabled...(this) mentorship to blossom (Lancia 1997). Similarly, this study conducted in this classroom is also a literature-rich environment. Students are encouraged to read, write, and talk about books. While this study was being conducted, the students were completing a unit about friendship, then a unit about fairy tales. Interestingly, when the students were reading books about friends, such as Cynthia Rylant's Henry and Mudge or Arnold Lobel's Frog and Toad Are Friends many of their stories included Rylant and Lobel's characters. Some students even borrowed Lobel's premise about two characters, one of whom often is in trouble. Many students chose to write about how one character always helped the other get out of danger. As the students completed a ten-week unit on fairy tales, many of their stories included the characters, plot, problem, or events from their favorite fairy tale. This natural connection suggests that young authors need to practice their writing craft by borrowing the ideas of previously written works.

Children Borrowing: Related Research

The literature on the topic of children borrowing is meager as can be seen in the following. However, interest in the topic was found as early as 1968. The first article, entitled "Children's Literature and Teaching Written Composition," was written by Editha B. Mills. This study was published in the October 1974 edition of Elementary English. Mills followed a four-year longitudinal study during the years 1968-1972. This study was conducted in two schools in Madison County, Georgia using the approach that children's literature could be used as a springboard for teaching writing composition (Mills 1974). There were 70 children enrolled in the study as first graders, however, 22 boys and 18 girls remained in the study in spite of a highly mobile population (Mills 1974).

Each year a series of weekly half-hour lessons for 24 weeks was taught by an investigator (Mills 1974). Sample lessons for the first graders included group compositions, dictated stories, and time for the children to write individually (Mills 1974). An example of a first grade lesson included reading the story The Three Little Pigs. Then, the students performed The Three Little Pigs focusing on the sequential order of the story. The purpose of this lesson was to retell the fairy tale in the order that the events incurred.

During the second and third grade, more emphasis was placed on individual efforts rather than group composition (Mills 1974). First, literature was read for pure enjoyment (Mills 1974). Next, in carefully measured small amounts, the read literature was then used as a model to instruct in sentence structure, figurative language, paragraph development, character descriptions, and vocabulary enrichment (Mills 1974). An example of a second grade lesson included reading Cinderella, then locating 20 compound words in the story. The words were written on chart paper for the children to use in writing their own stories (Mills 1974). At the third grade, Crow Boy and Little Toot lent themselves to the discovery of

dialect, clothes, buildings, and geography as reflections of time and place in fiction (Mills 1974). Then, the third graders wrote their own stories with an emphasis on setting.

During the fourth grade, testing was conducted by using another fourth grade class that did not have the weekly half-hour lessons as the control group. The California Short Form Test of Mental Maturity Form S was used to measure the IQ of the experimental and control groups. No significant differences were found (Mills 1974). Neither were significant differences found in the test results of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in reading, vocabulary, usage or composite scores (Mills 1974). The experimental group, which received the weekly half-hour lessons in children's literature and writing composition scored significantly higher than the control group on Writing Samples, ITBS Capitalization, ITBS Punctuation, and ITBS Total Language (Mills 1974).

The results of the aforementioned study indicate that children's literature can be used as a springboard for teaching composition. While the children did rely on the writing styles and devices of the literature, the students were able to create their own stories that contained original ideas as well as borrowed ideas.

The second study was written by Linda M. Phillips. This study, entitled "Using Children's Literature To Foster Written Language" was published in the July 1986 Research Report. Phillips' study of six first grade classes in a rural Newfoundland school district was conducted to determine how a teaching approach that emphasized literature would affect children's writing and help them to apply elements of form and content (Phillips 1986).

All of the first grade students had been administered the Metropolitan Readiness Test at the beginning of the school year to assess their overall reading readiness (Phillip 1986). Students from each of the six schools performed similarly on

overall readiness. All of the classes were using a basal series as the reading text (Phillips 1986). Writing, in these six classrooms, was characterized by such activities as completing a workbook page, filling in a ditto sheet, completing set blanks, and copying from the chalkboard (Phillips 1986).

The class randomly selected for the study, named the literature approach class, consisted of five boys and thirteen girls. Over 80 books were selected to be read and discussed with the children during the 12-week research period and comprised the language arts program (Phillips 1986). The remaining five first grade classes were named the basal reader classes. The teachers in the basal reader groups continued, as usual, with literature read daily, but the literature was not chosen on the basis of any prescribed criteria (Phillips 1986).

The literature approach group was read selections of children's literature on a daily basis for the time period of 12 weeks (Phillips 1986). The time period was divided into three phases. The first phase was dedicated to reading and writing fairy tales, the second phase emphasized fantasy reading and writing, and the third phase concentrated on poetry (Phillips 1986).

The criteria to assess the children's written language involved the following considerations (Phillips 1986): first, one of the purposes of the children's writing was to determine the influence of listening to literature (Phillips 1986), second, the purpose of the writing activity was considered (Phillips 1986). Several researchers (Rupley, 1976; Tripp, 1978; Searle and Dillon, 1980) advocate that the purpose of writing should be for enjoyment and development rather than on writing mechanics (Phillips 1986). Accordingly, spelling, handwriting and punctuation were not considered part of the criteria. The criteria did, however, include the classification of form (fairy tale, fantasy or poetry), content (coherence, character, dialogue, climax, and setting), vocabulary (adjectives, adverbs, vivid words, appropriate

words), and sentence structure (subject and predicate, interrogative and exclamatory sentences).

At the end of the 12 weeks, 1,200 stories and poems had been written by the children (Phillips 1986). Writing from the five basal approach classrooms was compared with the writing of those in the literature approach class (Phillips 1986). In the basal approach classrooms, the children's writing consisted of an ordering of a series with very little included detail and not much originality. The children in the basal approach classrooms often did not include time and setting in their stories (Phillips 1986). Their writing was strongly dependent on their basal text for ideas and vocabulary. As a result, the stories were short, often consisting of only three lines.

Conversely, the literature approach class wrote stories with much detail. Although many of the children's stories were similar to the literature read in class, there were original thoughts and ideas (Phillips 1986). The children were not afraid to "take risks" in their spelling, as opposed to the basal approach class. The children in the literature approach class wrote as if they were writing to an audience. They included vivid and effective character, time and setting descriptions (Phillips 1986).

The results of this study appear to indicate that the rich and diverse vocabulary from the stories read to the literature approach class appeared in their writing. This could suggest "that the children were assimilating new information from the stories and poems read in class and were then able to capitalize upon that information when needed" (Phillips 1986). Phillips stated, "It would seem that literature should be used extensively with all children on a regular basis to assist them in their language development, to assist them in their flow of ideas from which to write, and to offer them alternate forms of writing."

The third study, "The Effects of Listening to and Discussing Different Qualities of Children's Literature on the Narrative Writing of Fifth Graders" comes from the December 1990 issue of Research in the Teaching of English. The study was designed to determine whether the quality of literature read aloud to and discussed by children of different reading abilities would affect their writing (Dressel 1990).

The participants in the study were 48 fifth-graders from an upper middle class community. The school district identified writing as one of the priorities for the school year (Dressel 1990). The study was based on two hypotheses (Dressel 1990). First, the children who heard literature of differing quality would write stories that would be rated differently on the identified genre and literary characteristics (Dressel 1990). The literature was categorized as higher or lesser quality by the criteria used for the selection of the Newberry Award winners for excellence in literature for children and adolescents (Association for Library Service to Children, 1978). Second, the poorer readers, as identified by a standardized reading test, would result in a greater improvement in their writing due to access of available literature and the "read alouds." It was assumed that the better readers already had access to such literature (Dressel 1990).

To test the first hypothesis, students were randomly assigned to hear either the higher quality or the lesser quality literature (Dressel 1990). Each class looked at the way that the author had developed the characters, plot, setting, and the mood of the mystery novel (Dressel 1990). Then, the children wrote their own mystery novels. The children's writing was rated upon completion of the stories. Two independent readers scored the writing based on the model of scoring used by the Educational Testing Service for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Mullis, 1981).

The researcher found the different literature that was heard and discussed did affect the children's writing differently (Dressel 1990). The group that heard the higher quality literature was more effective in including plot and setting components, solutions for problems, and ending that were resolved and explained in their own writing.

The researcher, however, found that the results of the study did not support the second hypothesis that the writing of poorer readers would improve more that the writing of better readers if literature was made available to them by reading aloud (Dressel 1990). The researcher offers two explanations. First, hearing and discussing literature permits lower readers to gain from the literature, as did the good readers, but not more (Dressel 1990). Second, the writing was not evaluated by mechanical features, such as spelling and punctuation (Dressel 1990). If the writing were evaluated by these measures, perhaps, the reader would have a truer picture of a student's ability.

The implications of this study is best described by Fox's (1995) study, "hearing stories read aloud provided models for the children to reconstruct their own meaning and worlds..." Therefore, it appears that children are directly affected by the characteristics of stories that they read and discuss.

Deborah C. Simmons conducted the fourth study, "Integrating Narrative Reading Comprehension and Writing Instruction for All Learners." This study was presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference at Charleston, South Carolina in 1993.

This study examined the effects of an integrated reading and writing curriculum on the narrative writing of students in the eighth grade. In total, 93 students from middle to upper-middle socioeconomic backgrounds at a suburban middle school were the subjects (Simmons 1993). Two eighth grade teachers participated in the

study; each taught two sections of language arts to the students (Simmons 1993). Students from one teacher's classes served as the experimental group and the other teacher's classes participated in the control condition (Simmons 1993). Pretest performances on the vocabulary and comprehension subtests of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills showed no significant differences between the experimental and control groups (Simmons 1993).

Students in the experimental group received instruction in three interdependent phases. In phase one, the students learned to identify story grammar elements from authentic short stories (Simmons 1993). Phase two consisted of teaching the students strategies for planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising their own written work (Simmons 1993). In phase three, the students applied their knowledge of story grammar and planning written work by writing their own complex stories (Simmons 1993).

Students in the control group, meanwhile, received instruction and practice on narrative text comprehension for a total of 15 days over the course of 13 weeks (Simmons 1993). The students practiced locating story grammar elements by reading or listening to stories. Also during the 15 days, the students were taught a writing strategy (Simmons 1993). The strategy included ways to plan, draft, edit and revise compositions. This strategy was not as specific as the strategy that the experimental group practiced.

Students who received the integrated reading and writing instruction significantly outperformed students receiving the narrative instruction in the control group (Simmons 1993). These results were found after grading the writing of both the experimental and control groups. A rubric was used to score the range of the student writing (i.e., 1=poorly developed; 5=well-developed). Students in the integrated condition included more developed characters, settings, and attempts

to solve the problem of the story, however, many of the students continued to have difficulty generating well-developed stories (Simmons 1993).

The implications of this study call for more systematic attention to curriculum development and instruction in the area of story writing (Simmons 1993). There is potential in investing curriculum development in the area of using literature as a model to teach writing.

The fifth study entitled, "Improving Student Reading and Writing Skills through the Use of Writer's Workshop," was conducted by Ellen Klatt. The targeted population of this study consisted of early childhood special education, kindergarten, and first-grade students in a middle class community (Klatt 1996). The students selected for the study exhibited poor acquisition of reading and writing skills (Klatt 1996). Evidence for the existence of this problem came from teacher-made tests and teacher observations.

The object of the study was to increase literacy skills through the use of Writer's Workshop. The Writer's Workshop was implemented in the three different classrooms (Klatt 1996). In all three classrooms, Writer's Workshop began with a mini-lesson from the teacher. Then, the students would write and confer about a topic of their choice. Upon conclusion of Writer's Workshop, the students would share their finished and unfinished work in an author's chair.

In order to assess the effects of Writer's Workshop on students' reading and writing skills, the following measures were used: letter recognition test, concepts about print test, word lists, and three student writing samples. In September, half of all the sample students scored about 60% on the letter identification test. In comparison, March results indicated 72% of the students scored 60% or higher on the same test (Klatt 1996). All students scored about 60% by March of the concepts about print test, compared to September when these students all fell

between the ranges of 21 to 60% (Klatt 1996). On the word identification tests, 37% of the kindergartners recognized six or more words by March, compared to just four words or less in September. Of the first graders, 88% recognized 12 or more words (Klatt 1996). The early childhood students showed no gains on this test. The examiners felt that that was due to the fact that word acquisition skills were not age appropriate (Klatt 1996). 77% of the early childhood students were in stage one of writing in the fall, while 50% of these students progressed to stage two and three by March on the stages of writing tests (Klatt 1996). 94% of kindergarten and first grade students were in stages four, five, or six of writing (Klatt 1996). That was an increase of 80% since September (Klatt 1996).

The results indicate that Writer's Workshop is a valuable tool to integrate into the reading program. By exposing students to print and print concepts through literature, the students are better able to see the connection between reading and writing.

The most recent study that discusses link between children's writing and literature comes from The Reading Teacher, Volume 50, 1997. This study is entitled, "Literary Borrowing: The Effects of Literature on Children's Writing. The author Peter J. Lancia, conducted this study in his own second grade classroom at a suburban primary school that serves predominantly low-income students (Lancia 1997). Of the 21 students, three were identified as "learning disabled," five received support from a Title I teacher, and one was identified as "gifted and talented (Lancia 1997).

Lancia encountered many students who composed stories based on ideas from books that they read. His students appeared to spontaneously "borrow" ideas from literature in order to create their own pieces of writing (Lancia 1997). Lancia questioned how children selected and manipulated ideas when writing on their own

(Lancia 1997). Lancia collected 417 pieces of student writings over the course of one school year to help him determine how often his students borrowed book characters, plot devices, elements from a genre, and information from nonfiction materials.

Lancia's methodology included a daily Writing Workshop. This allowed students to select topics, confer with their peers and teachers, and develop favorite pieces of writing into published books (Lancia 1997). Individual writing conferences and interviews were held with the students to record student comments and provide insight into the collected writing samples (Lancia 1997). At no time did Lancia ask his students to write imitatively of an author.

Lancia compiled his student's writing and accepted both completed and uncompleted works. He then calculated the percentages of student borrowing. Lancia found that his students borrowed an entire plot from a story 60% of the time. Book characters were borrowed 28% of the time (Lancia 1997). Students borrowed plot devices such as setting, conflict, language patterns and vocabulary, titles, and structural devices particular to a book or series 20% of the time (Lancia 1997). 77% of the student writing contained particular stylistic devices from several similar books rather than a certain story, author or series (Lancia 1997). Finally, 55% of the student writing contained borrowed information from nonfiction materials (Lancia 1997).

The results appear to indicate that the students in this second grade classroom did borrow from literature that they had read. Literature offers an effective model for writing in the classroom (Lancia 1997). This borrowing should not be viewed as plagiarism (Atwell 1987). Students are not intending to steal ideas, but rather temporarily "use" them while developing their own writing style (Atwell 1987).

The findings of the aforementioned four studies present evidence that children's literature does influence children when they write. Ideas, such as characters, plot, setting, language patterns and vocabulary, titles, and structural devices are borrowed from the literature that children read. The implications of this finding can undoubtedly help teachers gain better insight into how literature influences and instructs young children. Teachers can then choose literature that models specific skills to supplement and compliment what is being traditionally taught. Based upon the four cited studies, children's literature may be the example needed for effective writing in the elementary grades.

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Appendix A
Tally

Total Number of Published Stories:
Total Number of Unpublished Stories:

Characters:

Published:

Unpublished:

Setting:

Published:

Unpublished:

Retell:

Published:

Unpublished:

Authors' style:

Published:

Unpublished:

Information from nonfiction:

Published:

Unpublished: